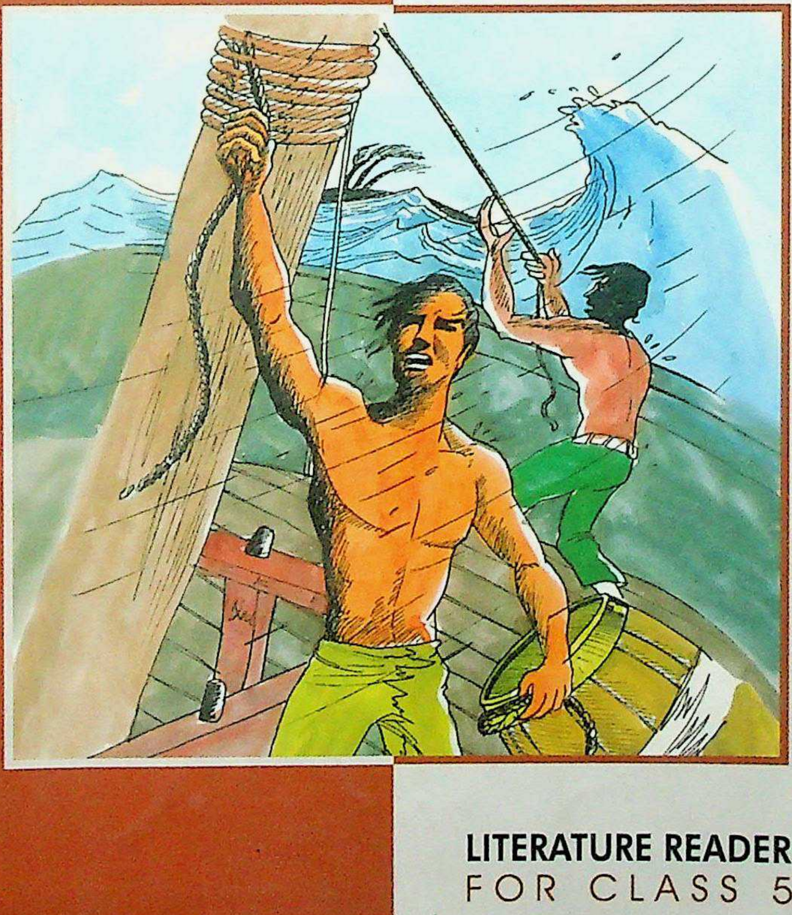
MILESTONES IN ENGLISH



LITERATURE READER
FOR CLASS 5

MILESTONES IN ENGLISH

LITERATURE READER
FOR CLASS 5

Gowri Ramachandran

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Preface

Milestones in English is a series of carefully graded textbooks intended to guide students from Nursery up to Class VIII in a manner that helps them to acquire confidence and ease in the use of English. This series has evolved from the research work of a team of English language experts and it is geared to equip the learner to communicate effectively in the English language. The student is guided to work out language-related problems in a practical manner, through activities, role-play, group work, discussions and so on, with the intention of making the study of language an enriching experience.

An effort has been made to provide the student with tools through which she or he will have an opportunity to master the four basic skills required for learning a language-Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. The aim is to develop excellence in comprehension, vocabulary and writing.

The study material for Milestones in English consists of:
- The Main Course Book
- The Literature Reader
- The Workbook

The Main Course Book contains literary and factual texts which have been arranged according to themes. Each unit contains one main text and two supplementary texts on the same theme.

Each text is followed by exercises which enable the student to:
- Read and comprehend the text
- Analyse, think and progress beyond the text

- Learn the use of new vocabulary
- Seek more information on a particular subject through an encyclopedia, the Internet and other sources. Students are encouraged to venture beyond the classroom in their quest for information.
- Write her or his thoughts and collate information in an organised fashion, in formats provided.

The Literature Reader comprises carefully chosen extracts from prose and poetry, which introduce the student to a wide range of writing from all over the world. These texts have been selected for their literary value, variety and contemporaneity. Each extract is followed by exercises which are intended to help the student to develop skills which enable her or him to:

- Read between the lines
- Interpret, analyse and arrive at conclusions
- Understand characterisation
- Attempt extrapolatory questions
- Stimulate the imagination
- Read further

The Workbook deals with contextualised, integrated grammar. Ample exercises have been provided for each topic. The exercises have been designed with a view to helping a student to:

- Understand the concept
- Gain competence through adequate practice

Each individual extract in the Main Course Book and Literature Reader is preceded by a short introduction which serves as a warm-up exercise. This will aid the teacher in his or her efforts to stimulate the learner to think, reflect and react through question-and-answer sessions and class discussions.

The objective of this set of books is to provide the learner with a moral and social environment dealing with contemporary issues, problems and solutions.

We hope our efforts will be appreciated by students, teachers and parents.

THE PUBLISHERS

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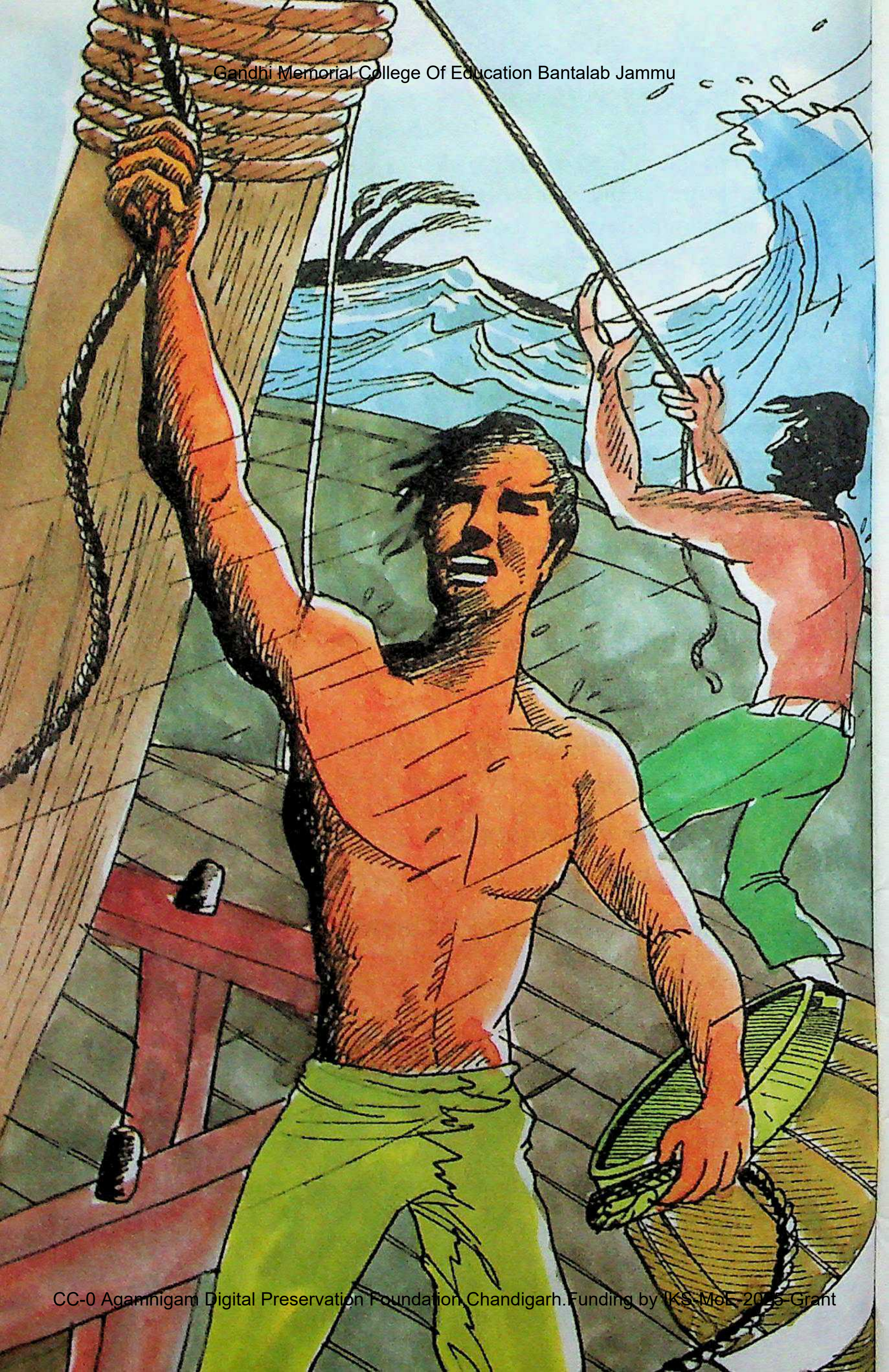


1

ONE

Signs of Trouble: Three Men Desert

A journey by ship is always adventurous. It is dangerous, yet thrilling.

December the 1st. The weather for sometime has been very unsettled. This afternoon, the wind blew fresh from the NW. By night, such a heavy broken sea came into the bay, we had to batten down all the hatchways. Though the rain came down in torrents, everybody was on deck all night.

In the morning, the wind increased. It was impossible to put to sea for safety. The river swelled so much with the rain that the point of land on which the tents stood became an island. To save the bread-fruit plants, the men cut a path for the river through part of the beach away from the tents.

The sea was breaking very high on the beach, so I was astonished to see Tinah and Iddeah put off in a canoe and make their way through the violent surf to the ship. They each had a paddle, which they managed with great activity and skill. On board, these kind people embraced me and explained they were worried for the ship's safety.

Towards noon, however, the sea calmed. At sunset, Iddeah went back to shore, but Tinah remained with me the whole night.

Sunday, the 7th. I received a visit from the chief Poeeno and his wife. Like Tinah and Iddeah, they were concerned for our safety. Poeeno said that if any accident happened to the ship, I would be welcome to live with him and that he and his people would cut down trees and build me another ship.

From this sample of the weather and the information of the natives, I am convinced that it will not be safe to continue in this bay much longer. We must sail as soon as possible.

Monday, the 8th. Our surgeon died this afternoon. He had been ill for a long time. This unfortunate man drank a great deal. Throughout the voyage, he scarcely stirred from his cabin. When he did, it was because he was dangerously drunk. He hated exercise, so he never would take half a dozen turns upon deck at a time during the whole voyage. I ordered all the other men to exercise; I thought the surgeon should know the needs of his body better.

Wednesday, the 17th. After a long day of walking the island, Nelson and I ate our dinner and then headed back towards the ship. I was much delighted during this walk with the number of children I saw everywhere. They have many games that are common with children in England: flying kites, cats cradle, swinging, dancing, jumping, rope, walking upon stilts, and wrestling.

Almost every day we received presents of fish, dolphin, tuna, bonit, and a few small rock fish. The natives' fishing is done mostly at night. They light blazing torches on the reefs or in their canoes to attract the fish. Sometimes in fine weather there are so many canoes, the whole sea appears lighted. In fishing from their canoes, they use hook and line. On the reefs, they strike the fish with a spear or scoop them out with small nets. Whenever there is a show of fish, a fleet of canoes immediately goes to sea. Their hooks are bright and used without bait; their rods are made of bamboo.

Monday, the 5th of January 1789. At the relief of the watch at four o'clock this morning, I discovered that three men were absent. They had taken arms and ammunition. No one on board knew what their plan was or which way they had gone. I went on shore to the chiefs and soon was told that the deserters' boat had been found and that they had taken a sailing canoe to another island five miles away.

I sent Mr Fryer, the master, and one of the chiefs after the *Bounty's* cutter, but before they had got halfway to shore, they met five natives who were bringing the boat back to the ship. This pleased me and I rewarded them.

I was determined not to leave Otaheite without those men. I could not understand their desire to remain on the island and forsake their families and the lives they led in England. But more, I would not allow them to desert His Majesty's service.

Thursday, the 22nd. I received a message that the deserters were in a house five miles away. A little before sunset, I got into the cutter and left the ship. The night was very dark and windy as I landed at some distance from the place where they were. The deserters had evidently heard I was coming after them, for when I came near the house, they gave themselves up. I discovered that their ammunition had been spoiled by the sea during their canoe trip, so they had to give up without a fight. The natives who had kept a close watch on them left us. The deserters were severely punished when we reached the ship.

January 23rd. This afternoon I punished one of the seamen with nineteen lashes for striking an Indian. His action was so serious and so totally against my orders that I could not let it go unpunished.

This morning I ordered all the chests to be taken on shore, and the inside of the ship to be washed with boiling water to kill the cockroaches. It was essential that we keep the ship free of all insects because of the plants.

Tinah surprised me after dinner by seriously suggesting that he and his wife Iddeah should go to England with me. He wanted very much to see King George, who, he was sure, would be glad to see him. I had to promise him that I would ask the King's permission to take them to England, if I came again.

Friday, the 6th of February. Something happened today that worried me greatly—not only because the ship was put in danger, but because it lessened the confidence and good understanding between us and the natives. The wind had blown strong the night before. At daylight, we discovered that the cable that anchored the ship had been cut near the water's edge. Only one strand of the cable remained. After repairs were made, I gave orders that one of the midshipmen should keep watch more directly on the cable. I believe a native from another island cut it. Tinah promised to find the guilty person.

It later occurred to me that this attempt to cut the ship adrift might have been the act of some of our own men. Their wish to remain at Otaheite would have come true, without danger of whipping for desertion, if the ship had been driven ashore. At the time, though, I had no idea that their attachment to this island was so strong, that my men would choose to remain here and abandon every hope of returning to their native country.

From the 5th to 14th of March, the wind blew constantly, with a great deal of rain. This slowed our departure plans.

The 16th of March. For some days Tinah has been busy making two fine clocks as a present for King George. They are made of brightly coloured bird feathers. Finished today, they were hung in his house, and Tinah said a prayer that the King of England might forever remain his friend and not forget him.

The natives show that they are sad we will be leaving them shortly. They are unusually kind and attentive.

This afternoon we began to remove the plants to the ship. They were in excellent condition. The roots had appeared through the bottom of the pots and would have shot into the ground if we hadn't taken care to prevent it.

Tuesday, the 31st. Today, all the plants are on board. There are 774 pots, 39 tubs, and 24 boxes—in all, 1,015 breadfruit plants. In addition, we collected a number of other fruit and vegetable plants from the island.

I gave some last presents to my friends. Each man's native *tyo*, or friend, brought him presents also. I took the hogs given by the natives to individual men and added them to the ship's stores.

Friday, the 3rd of April. I mean to sail early tomorrow morning. The ship has been crowded the whole day with natives, and we are loaded with food and supplies. This evening there is no dancing and mirth on the beach as we have had all along. Now everything is silent.

Saturday, the 4th. At half-past six, shortly after daylight, we weighed anchor. There was no wind; we towed the ship out of the harbour with our boats. Soon after, the sea breeze came and we stood off towards the sea.

During this entire time that we were anchored at Otaheite, the picture of Captain Cook had been kept on the ship. When I returned the picture to Tinah, I wrote on the back, the time of the *Bounty's* arrival and departure and an account of the number of plants on board.

We bid farewell to Otaheite, where for 23 weeks we had been treated with great affection which increased the longer we stayed. The natives were friendly and endearing. All the men were welcomed into the natives' homes and had the pleasure of sharing their simple, easy, comfortable ways. I'm sure some of the men found this life enjoyable, and it might have crossed their minds to stay.

An extract from 'The Mutiny on Board, HMS Bounty'
by William Bligh

1. **Learn new words**
   a. Torrent
   b. Embrace
   c. Desertion
   d. Endearing

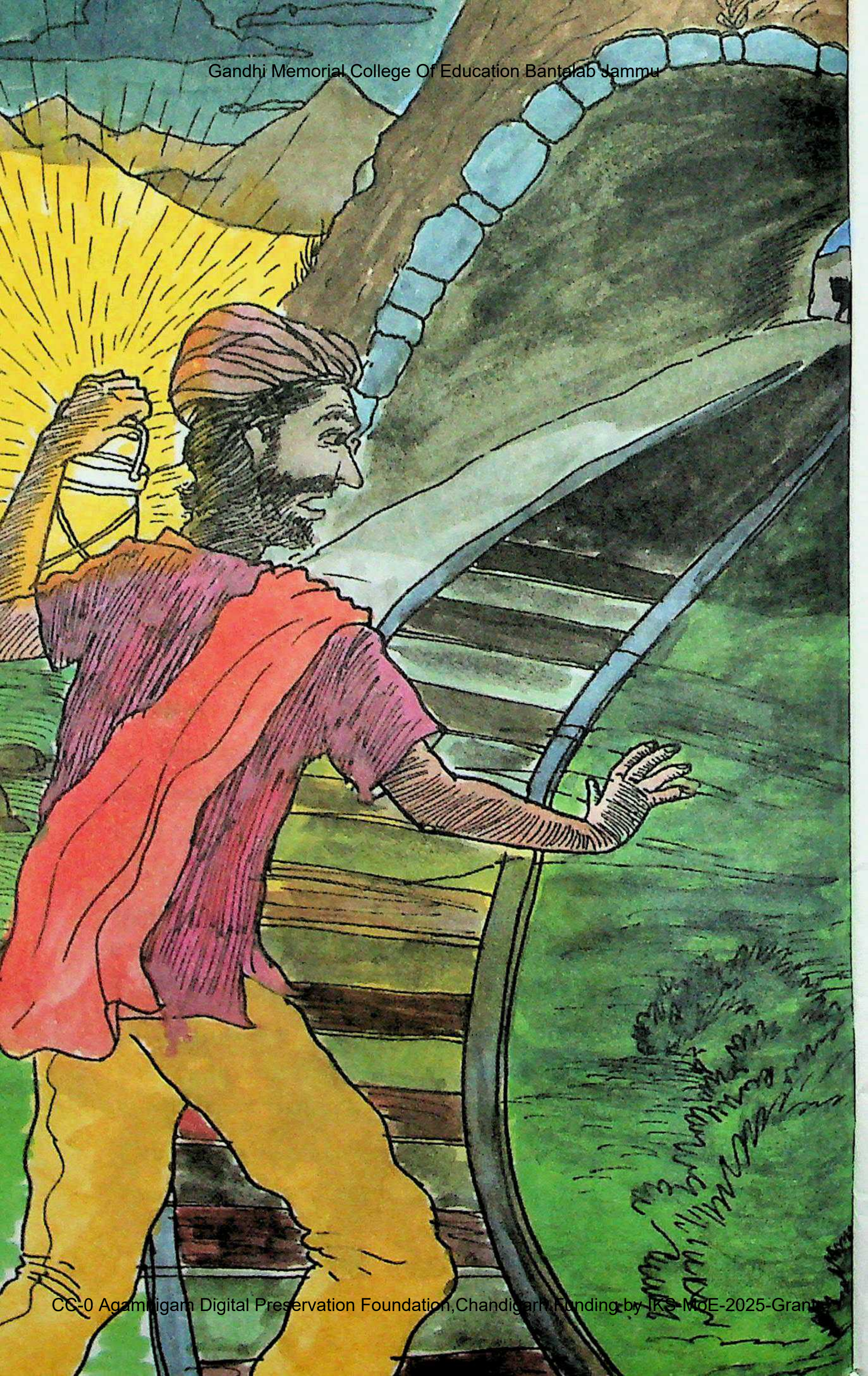
   Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. **Learn to comprehend**

   The entire story is in the favour of entries made on a day-to-day basis by the author. Maintain a diary and write a day-to-day account of your life at school, at home and in the playground.

3. **Think**

   Why do you think the author has recorded the experiences on a day-to-day basis?



2

TWO

The Tiger in the Tunnel

What danger lurks at the end of the tunnel? What if it happens to be a tiger?

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand.

There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze. Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up.

Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself, slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him like a shroud. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel.

Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before the cutting.

Baldeo was responsible for signalling whether or not the tunnel was clear of obstruction, and his hand-worked signal stood before the entrance. At night it was his duty to see that the lamp was burning, and the overland mail passed through safely.

"Shall I come too Father?" asked Tembu sleepily, still lying huddled in a corner of the hut.

"No, it is cold tonight. Do not get up."

Tembu, who was twelve, did not always sleep with his father at the station, for he had also to help in the home, where his mother and small sister were usually alone. They lived in a small tribal village on the outskirts of the forest, about three miles from the station. Their small rice fields did not provide them with more than a bare living and Baldeo considered himself lucky to have got the job of Khalasi at this small wayside signal-stop.

Still drowsy, Baldeo groped for his lamp in the darkness, then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light, he left the hut, closed the door behind him, and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

Baldeo wondered whether the lamp on the signal post was still alight. Gathering his shawl closer about him, he stumbled on, sometimes along the rails, sometimes along the ballast. He longed to get back to his warm corner in the hut.

The eeriness of the place was increased by the neighbouring hills which overhung the main line threateningly. On entering the cutting with its sheer rock walls towering high above the rails, Baldeo could not help thinking about the wild animals he might encounter. He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a maneater, who was supposed to frequent this spot; but he hardly believed these stories, for since his arrival at this place a month ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger.

Baldeo walked confidently, for being a tribal himself, he was used to the jungle and its ways. Like his forefather, he carried a small axe; fragile to look at, but deadly when in use. Within it, in three or four swift strokes, he could cut down a tree as neatly as if it had been sawn; and he prided himself upon his skill in wielding it against wild animals. He had killed a young boar with it once, and the family had feasted on the flesh for three days. The axe-head of pure steel, thin but ringing true like a bell, had been made by his father over a charcoal fire. This axe was a part of himself, and wherever he went, be it to the local market seven miles away, or to a tribal dance, the axe was always in his hand. Occasionally an official who had come to the station had offered him good money for the weapon; but Baldeo had no intention of parting with it.

The cutting curved sharply, and in the darkness the black entrance to the tunnel loomed up menacingly.

The signal-light was out. Baldeo set to work to haul the lamp down by its chain. If the oil had finished, he would have to return to the hut for more. The mail train was due in five minutes.

Once more he fumbled for his matches. Then suddenly he stood still and listened. The frightened cry of a barking deer, followed by a crashing sound in the undergrowth, made Baldeo hurry. There was still a little oil in the lamp, and after an instant's hesitation he lit the lamp again and hoisted it back into position. Having done this, he walked quickly down the tunnel, and having made sure that the line was clear, he returned to the entrance and sat down to wait for the mail train.

The train was late. Sitting huddled up, almost dozing, he soon forgot his surroundings and began to nod.

Back in the hut, the trembling of the ground told of the approach of the train, and a low distant rumble, woke the boy, who sat up rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

"Father, it's time to light the lamp," he mumbled, and then, realizing that his father had been gone some time, he lay down again but he was wide awake now, waiting for the train to pass, waiting for his father's returning footsteps.

A low grunt resounded from the top of the cutting. In a second Baldeo was awake, all his senses alert. Only a tiger could emit such a sound.

There was no shelter for Baldeo, but he grasped his axe firmly, trying to make out the direction from which the animal was approaching. For sometime there was only silence, Then a thump and the rattle of small stones announced that the tiger had sprung into the cutting.

Baldeo, listening as he had never listened before, wondered if it was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction—the direction of the hut, in which Tembu would be lying unprotected. He did not have to wonder for long. Before a minute had passed he made out the huge body of the tiger trotting steadily towards him. Its eyes shone a brilliant green in the light from the signal lamp. Flight was useless, for in the dark the tiger would be more surefooted than Baldeo and would soon be upon him from behind. Baldeo stood with his back to the signal-post, motionless, staring at the great brute moving rapidly towards him. The tiger, used to the ways of men, for it had been preying on them for years, came on fearlessly, and with a quick run and snarl, struck out with its right paw, expecting to bowl over this puny man who dared stand in the way.

Baldeo, however, was ready. With a marvellously agile leap he avoided the paw and brought his axe down on the animal's shoulder. The tiger gave a roar and attempted to close in. Again Baldeo drove his axe with true aim; but, to his horror, the beast swerved, and the axe caught the tiger on the shoulder, almost severing the leg. To make matters worse, the axe remained stuck in the bone, and Baldeo was left without a weapon.

The tiger, roaring with pain, now sprang upon Baldeo, bringing him down and then tearing at his broken body. It was all over in a few minutes. Baldeo was conscious only of a searing pain down his back, and then there was blackness and the night closed in on him forever.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth. The overland mail was approaching.

As the train entered the cutting, the engine whistled once, loud and piercingly. The tiger raised his head, then slowly got to his feet. He found himself trapped like the man. Flight along the cutting was impossible. He entered the tunnel, running as fast as his wounded leg would carry him. And then, with a roar and a shower of sparks, the train entered the yawning tunnel. The noise in the confined space was deafening but, when the train came out into the open, on the other side, silence returned once more to the forest and the tunnel.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the headlamps. He received the surprise of this life; for, just above the cow-catcher laid the major portion of the tiger, cut in half by the engine.

There was considerable excitement and conjecture at the station, but back at the cutting there was no sound except for the sobs of the boy as he sat beside the body of his father. He sat there a long time, unafraid of the darkness, guarding the body from jackals and hyenas, until the first faint light of dawn brought with in the arrival of the relief-watchman.

Tembu and his sister and mother were plunged in grief for two whole days; but life had to go on, and a living had to be made, and all the responsibility now fell on Tembu. Three nights later, he was at the cutting, lighting the signal-lamp for the overland mail.

He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. There was nothing to be afraid of—his father had killed the tiger, the forest gods were pleased; and besides, he had the axe with him, his father's axe, and he knew how to use it.

By Ruskin Bond

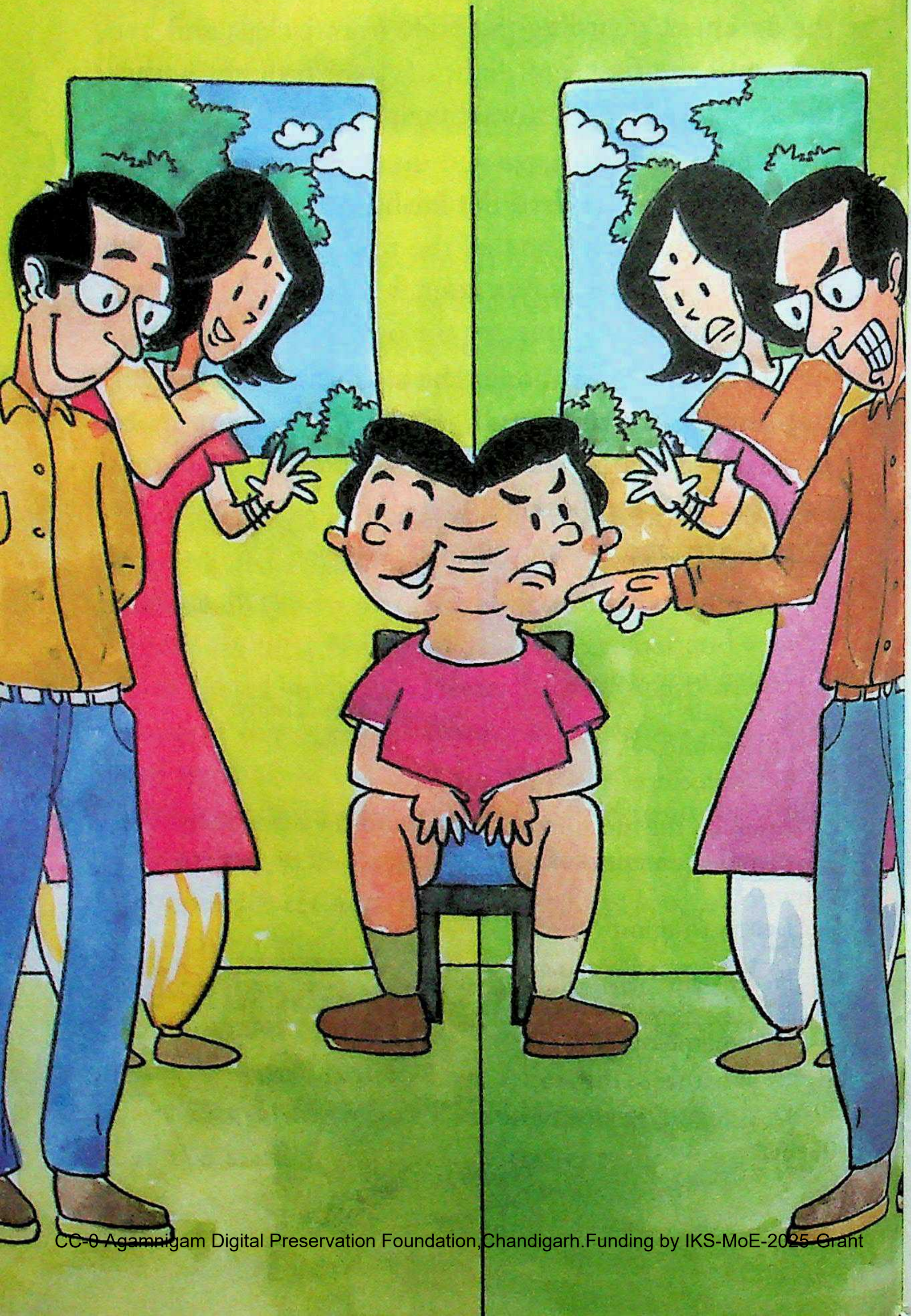
1. Learn new words

a. Fragile
b. Menacingly
c. Resound
d. Agile
e. Conjecture

Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. Learn to comprehend

a. Who was Baldeo and what was the nature of his work?
b. Why does the author say that the station, was a station in name only?
c. What were the stories that Baldeo had heard?
d. Why did Baldeo never want to part with his axe?



3

THREE

These Simple Things

The simplest things in life are best—
A patch of green,
A small bird's nest,

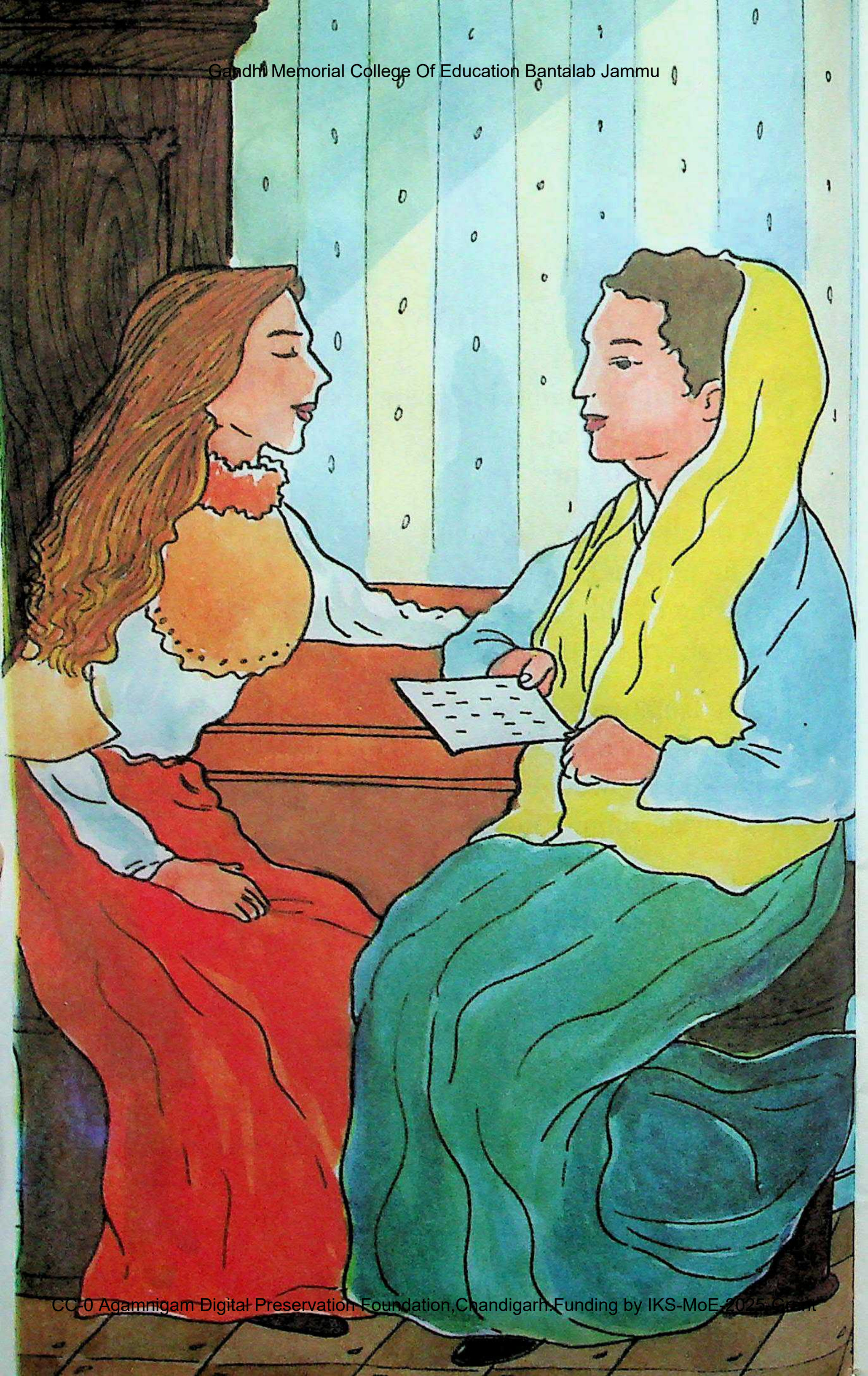
A drink of water, fresh and cold,
The taste of bread,
A song of old;
These are the things that matter most.

The laughter of a child,
A favourite book,
Flowers growing wild,
A cricket singing in a shady nook.

A ball that bounces high!
A summer shower,
A rainbow in the sky,
The touch of a loving hand,

And time to rest—
These simple things in life are best.

By Ruskin Bond



4

FOUR

The Story of Helen Keller

A good teacher, hard work and dedication can go a long way in making the impossible possible.

Helen Keller, born in the little Alabama town of Tuscumbia on 27th June, 1880, was a normal baby up to nineteen months and seemed to enjoy the flowers, the flitting birds, the play of light and shadow. Then, she was stricken with a 'fever of brain and stomach'. She was desperately ill, but the fever subsided almost as suddenly as it had begun.

Soon her mother noticed that Helen's eyes did not close when she bathed the child. She took her to an oculist and learned that Helen was blind. Next she noticed that the child did not respond to the loud ringing of a bell. Helen was deaf, too. Inevitably, by the age of three she was also mute, and such words as she had babbled at a year and half were forgotten.

Helen grew fast and was physically strong, but her good nature dissolved in frantic tantrums, Her failure to make herself understood was followed by wild gusts of rage. She would fling herself on the grass and give way to uncontrollable fits of screaming. Her table manners were appalling. She would not wash her face or button her shoes. Years later she wrote, “I felt as if invisible hands were holding me. I made frantic efforts to free myself.”

Her gentle mother, cowed by such violence, gave in to her at every point.

Finally Helen was taken to Michael Anagnos, at Perkins. He recommended as tutor—an Irish girl who had just graduated. This was Anne Sullivan, who was to be Helen Keller’s inseparable companion for the next half century. She was the child of Irish immigrants.

Anne Sullivan, arriving in Alabama, was struck by Helen Keller’s fine bearing and intelligent face. Helen rushed at her as she stepped from the carriage, felt her dress and face, tried to open her bag and staged a scene on the doorstep when Mrs Keller attempted to stop her.

Miss Sullivan offered Helen a doll sent by the Perkins children. When Helen had played with it for sometime, Miss Sullivan spelt into her hand the letters d-o-l-l. The child’s attention was arrested by this unfamiliar manoeuvre and she tried to imitate the finger motion. This was the first conscious effort ever made to teach Helen Keller.

When Miss Sullivan tried to put away the doll, a tussle began. It was the first of many. The new teacher moved Helen away from her upset parents to a nearby cottage. A Herculean battle of wills raged for several days. It was a physical as well as a mental struggle, but Miss Sullivan won, even though she had to hold Helen down by force for two hours at a time to quell her fierce resistance.

She noticed that the child already had several ways of indicating her wish. If she longed for ice-cream, she turned the handle of an imaginary freezer. For bread and butter she went through the motion of cutting and spreading. She pretended to put on glasses to symbolise her father. She took to rocking the new doll, making a monotonous chanting sound with her lips and touching them lightly with her fingers. But she also learned to spell new words by the manual language—pin, hat, cup and verbs like sit, stand and walk.

Within two weeks a gleam of light dawned. Miss Sullivan took her to the pump house to draw water. As the water flowed into the mug and over the child's right hand, she spelt wa-t-e-r on her other hand. The word, coming so close upon the sensation of cold water rushing over her hand, seemed to startle her, Miss Sullivan wrote, "She dropped the mug and stood as one transfixed. A new light came into her face."

Helen returned to the house in a fever of excitement, touching everything as she moved visibly seeking its name. The ground, the tellis, the bushes, the pump—she knew now that everything had a name and she wished to know what it was. Within the space of a few hours she had added thirty new words to her vocabulary. From that point on her education proceeded with uncanny speed.

Miss Sullivan taught her to read with little sentences slipped into a frame, after each separate word, raised on cardboard had been placed beside its objects, like—doll is on bed. "When her fingers touched words she knows," Miss Sullivan wrote, "she fairly screams with pleasure and hugs and kisses me for joy. When I gave her my Braille slate to amuse her, the little witch was soon writing letters. I had no idea she knew what a letter was."

At the end of three months Helen knew 400 words and many idioms. That summer the game went on for hours at a time, outdoors and indoors. She learned to distinguish mountain laurel from honeysuckle, and a pig from a hen. Miss Sullivan made raised maps in clay for her pupil, with strings and orange sticks for equator, meridians and poles. She taught Helen to count by stringing beads in groups and arranging kindergarten straws for addition and subtraction. Arithmetic was the only subject the child disliked. Her pencil writing was soon excellent. Within a month after trying it, she wrote a correctly spelt and legible letter to her cousin.

Miss Sullivan took Helen back to Perkins when she was almost eight, and a whole new world opened up for her. She had Braille books to read and she could associate with other children who knew the manual alphabet. She soon displayed amazing abilities. She studied arithmetic, geography, zoology, botany and readings. These were days of great mental growth for Helen. As she and Miss Sullivan travelled, the teacher spelt into her hand fluent descriptions of the passing scene—the hills and the rivers, the hamlets and cities, the way people looked and what they wore. They spent their summers at Cape Cod and Helen learned to swim, but her first splash into the sea brought a great surprise. No one had thought to tell her that there was salt in the ocean.

College was the next step, and Helen prepared with her usual thoroughness. She entered the Cambridge School for Young Ladies in Massachusetts and was tutored intensively, with Miss Sullivan always by her side to read the lectures into her hand. In 1990 she enrolled at Radcliffe, the first individual with a triple handicap to enter an institution of higher learning. But college was a disappointment to Helen. She did well, but felt the lack of time for meditation. She could not take notes during lectures because her hands were too 'busy listening'. What she could remember, she jotted down when she got home. For algebra, geometry and physics, she used a Braille-writer, but she had little aptitude for mathematics. Examinations were a nightmare. But she enjoyed some of her classes and she and her teacher worked with their usual wholehearted concentration. They got books in Braille from Germany and England, and Helen read until her fingers bled.

Helen graduated in 1904, with special honours in English. She was twenty-four years old. Requests were already flowing in for appearances and for magazine articles. She was invited to the St Louis Exposition in 1904 to awaken worldwide interest in the education of the deaf-blind.

An extract from 'The Steady Light of Helen Keller'
by Ishbel Ross

1. Learn new words

a. Subsided
b. Tantrums
c. Appalling
d. Manoeuvre
e. Quell

Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. Learn to comprehend

a. When and how did Helen turn blind, deaf and mute?
b. Why was Helen a violent child?
c. Who was Anne Sullivan?
d. Make chart of the various means used by Ms Sullivan to teach Helen various subjects.
e. Why was college a disappointment for Helen?

3. Think

a. What was the role played by Anne Sullivan in Helen Keller's life?
b. What is most noteworthy about Helen's success?

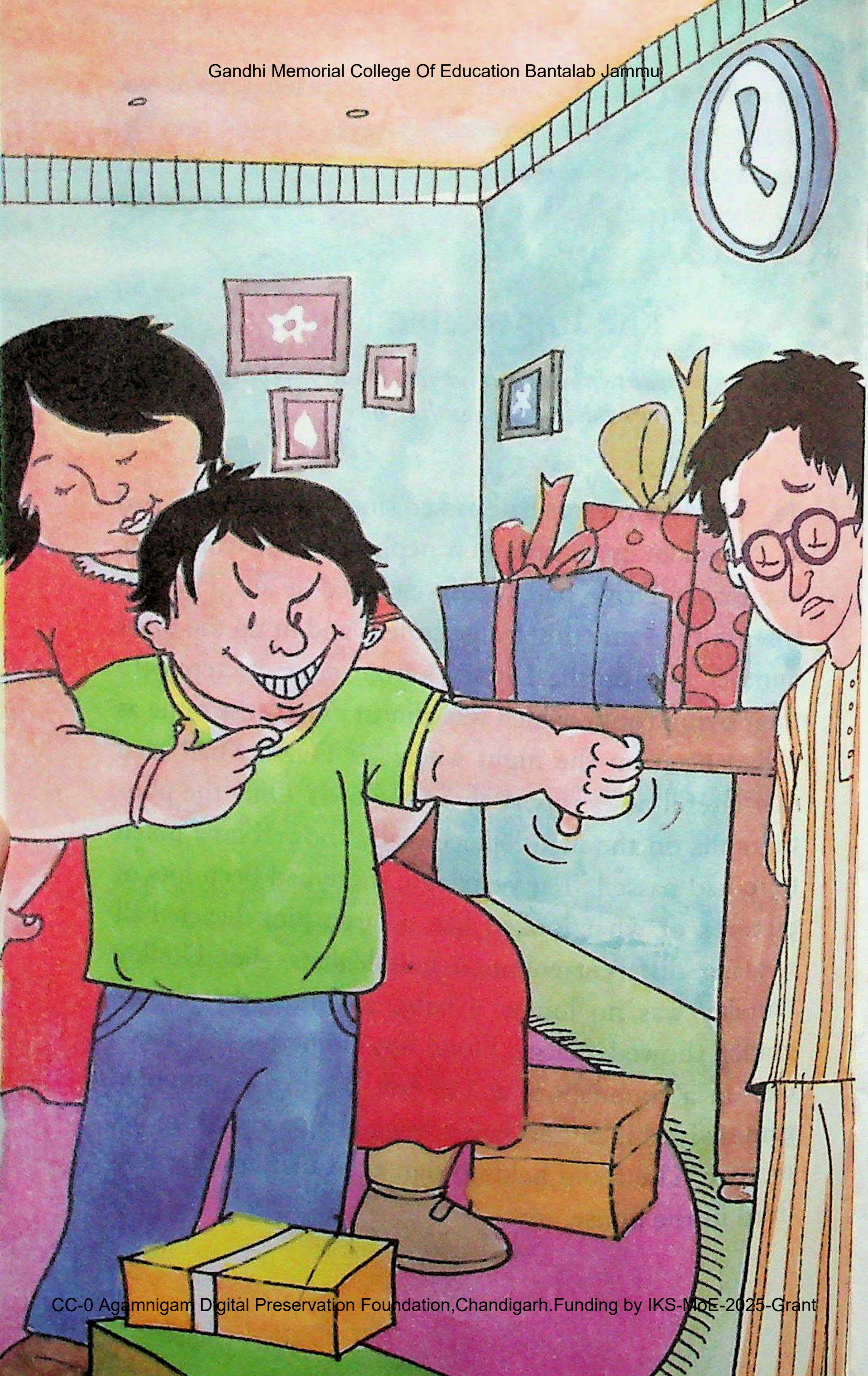
5

FIVE

The Impeccable Dudley

Read this beautiful extract about Dudley—the wonderful cousin of Harry Potter. Do you like him?

Nearly ten years had passed since the Dursleys had woken up to find their nephew on the front step, but Privet Drive had hardly changed at all. The sun rose on the same tidy front gardens and lit up the brass number four on the Dursley's front door; it crept into their living room, which was almost exactly the same as it had been on the night when Mr Dursley had seen that fateful news report about the owls. Only the photographs on the mantlepiece really showed how much time had passed. Ten years ago, there had been lots of pictures of what looked like a large pink beach ball wearing different-coloured bobble hats—but Dudley Dursley was no longer a baby, and now the photographs showed a large, blond boy riding his first bicycle, on a roundabout at the fair, playing a computer game with his father, being hugged and kissed by his mother. The room held no sign at all that another boy lived in the house, too.



Yet Harry Potter was still there, asleep at the moment, but not for long. His Aunt Petunia was awake and it was her shrill voice which made the first noise of the day.

"Up! Get up! Now!"

Harry woke with a start. His aunt rapped on the door again.

"Up!" she screeched. Harry heard her walking towards the kitchen and then the sound of the frying pan being put on the cooker. He rolled on to his back and tried to remember the dream he had been having. It had been a good one. There had been a flying motorbike in it. He had a funny feeling he'd had the same dream before.

His aunt was back outside the door.

"Are you up yet?" she demanded.

"Nearly," said Harry.

"Well, get a move on, I want you to look after the bacon. And don't you dare let it burn, I want everything perfect on Duddy's birthday."

Harry groaned.

"What did you say?" his aunt snapped through the door.

"Nothing, nothing…"

Dudley's birthday—how could he have forgotten? Harry got slowly out of bed and started looking for socks. He found a pair under his bed, and after pulling a spider off one of them, put them on. Harry was used to spiders, because the cupboard under the stairs was full of them, and that was where he slept.

When he was dressed he went down the hall into the kitchen. The table was almost hidden beneath all Dudley's birthday presents. It looked as though Dudley had got the new computer he wanted, not to mention the second television and the racing bike. Exactly why Dudley wanted a racing bike was a mystery to Harry, as Dudley was very fat and hated exercise—unless of course it involved punching somebody. Dudley's favourite punchbag was Harry, but he couldn't often catch him. Harry didn't look it, but he was very fast.

Perhaps it had something to do with living in a dark cupboard, but Harry had always been small and skinny for his age. He looked even smaller and skinner than he really was because all he had to wear were old clothes of Dudley's and Dudley was about four times bigger than he was. Harry had a thin face, knobbly knees, black hair and bright green eyes. He wore round glasses held together with a lot of Sellotape because of all the times Dudley had punched him on the nose. The only thing Harry liked about his own appearance was a very thin scar on his forehead which was shaped like a bolt of lightning. He had had it as long as he could remember and the first question he could ever remember asking his Aunt Petunia was how he had got it.

"In the car crash when your parents died," she had said. "And don't ask questions."

Don't ask questions—that was the first rule for a quiet life with the Dursleys.

Uncle Vernon entered the kitchen as Harry was turning over the bacon.

"Comb your hair!" he barked, by way of a morning greeting.

About once a week, Uncle Vernon looked over the top of his newspaper and shouted that Harry needed a haircut. Harry must have had more haircuts than the rest of the boys in his class put together, but it made no difference, his hair simply grew that way—all over the place.

Harry was frying eggs by the time Dudley arrived in the kitchen with his mother. Dudley looked a lot like Uncle Vernon. He had a large pink face, not much neck, small watery blue eyes, and thick blond hair that lay smoothly on his thick fat head. Aunt Petunia often said that the Dudley looked like a baby angel—Harry often said that Dudley looked like a pig in a wig.

Harry put the plates of egg and bacon on the table, which was difficult as there wasn't much room. Dudley, meanwhile, was counting his presents. His face fell.

"Thirty-six," he said, looking up at his mother and father. "That's two less than last year."

"Darling, you haven't counted Auntie Marge's present, see, it's here under this big one from Mummy and Daddy."

"All right, thirty-seven then," said Dudley, going red in the face. Harry, who could see a huge Dudley tantrum coming on, began wolfing down his bacon as fast as possible in case Dudley turned the table over.

Aunt Petunia obviously scented danger too, because she said quickly, "And we'll buy you another two presents while we're out today. How's that, popkin? Two more presents. Is that all right?"

Dudley thought for a moment. It looked like hard work. Finally he said slowly, "So I'll have thirty… thirty…"

"Thirty-nine, sweetums," said Aunt Petunia.

"Oh." Dudley sat down heavily and grabbed the nearest parcel. "All right then."

Uncle Vernon chuckled.

"Little tyke wants his money's worth, just like his father. Atta boy, Dudley!" He ruffled Dudley's hair.

At that moment the telephone rang and Aunt Petunia went to answer it while Harry and Uncle Vernon watched Dudley unwrap the racing bike, a cine-camera, a remote-control aeroplane, sixteen new computer games and a video recorder. He was ripping the paper off a gold wristwatch when Aunt Petunia came back from the telephone, looking both angry and worried.

"Bad news, Vernon," she said. "Mrs Figg's broken her leg. She can't take him." She jerked her head in Harry's direction.

Dudley's mouth fell open in horror but Harry's heart gave a leap. Every year on Dudley's birthday his parents took him and a friend out for the day, to adventure parks, hamburger bars or the cinema. Every year, Harry was left behind with Mrs Figg, a mad old lady who lived two streets away. Harry hated it there. The whole house smelled of cabbage and Mrs Figg made him look at photographs of all the cats she'd ever owned.

"Now what?" said Aunt Petunia, looking furiously at Harry as though he'd planned this. Harry knew he ought to feel sorry that Mrs Figg had broken her leg, but it wasn't easy when he reminded himself it would be a whole year before he had to look at Tibbles, Snowy, Mr Paws and Tufty again.

"We could phone Marge," Uncle Vernon suggested.

"Don't be silly, Vernon, she hates the boy."

The Dursleys often spoke about Harry like this, as though he wasn't there—or rather, as though he was something very nasty that couldn't understand them, like a slug.

"What about what's-her-name, your friend—Yvonne?"

"On holiday in Majorca," snapped Aunt Petunia.

"You could just leave me here," Harry put in hopefully (he'd be able to watch what he wanted on television for a change and maybe even have a go on Dudley's computer).

Aunt Petunia looked as though she'd just swallowed a lemon.

"And come back and find the house in ruins?" she snarled.

"I won't blow up the house," said Harry, but they weren't listening.

"I suppose we could take him to the zoo," said Aunt Petunia slowly, "...and leave him in the car..."

"That car's new, he's not sitting in it alone..."

Dudley began to cry loudly. In fact, he wasn't really crying, it had been years since he'd really cried, but he knew that if he screwed up his face and wailed, his mother would give him anything he wanted.

"Dinky Duddydums, don't cry, Mummy won't let him spoil your special day!" she cried, flinging her arms around him.

"I...don't...want...him...t-t-to come!" Dudley yelled between huge pretend sobs. "He always sp-spoils everything!" He shot Harry a nasty grin through the gap in his mother's arms.

Just then, the doorbell rang. "Oh, Good Lord, they're here!" said Aunt Petunia frantically—and a moment later Dudley's best friend, Piers Polkiss, walked in with his mother. Piers was a scrawny boy with a face like a rat. He was usually the one who held people's arms behind their backs while Dudley hit them. Dudley stopped pretending to cry at once.

Half an hour later, Harry, who couldn't believe his luck, was sitting in the back of the Dursley's car with Piers and Dudley, on the way to the zoo for the first time in his life. His aunt and uncle hadn't been able to think of anything else to do with him, but before they'd left, Uncle Vernon had taken Harry aside.

"I'm warning you," he had said, putting his large purple face right up close to Harry's, "I'm warning you now, boy—any funny business, anything at all—and you'll be in that cupboard from now until Christmas."

"I'm not going to do anything," said Harry, "honestly..."

But Uncle Vernon didn't believe him. No one ever did.

The problem was, strange things often happened around Harry and it was just no good telling the Dursleys he didn't make them happen.

An extract from 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'
by J.K. Rowling

1. **Learn new words**
   a. Impeccable
   b. Tantrum

c. Frantic
d. Mantelpiece

Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. Learn to comprehend

a. Describe Dudley. What impression do you form of Dudley?
b. What happened every year on Dudley's birthday? How was it different this year?
c. Why did the family finally decide to take Harry along to the zoo?
d. Why did Harry hope to be left behind?
e. How did Harry's aunt treat him?
f. Is the title apt? Why/Why not?

3. Think

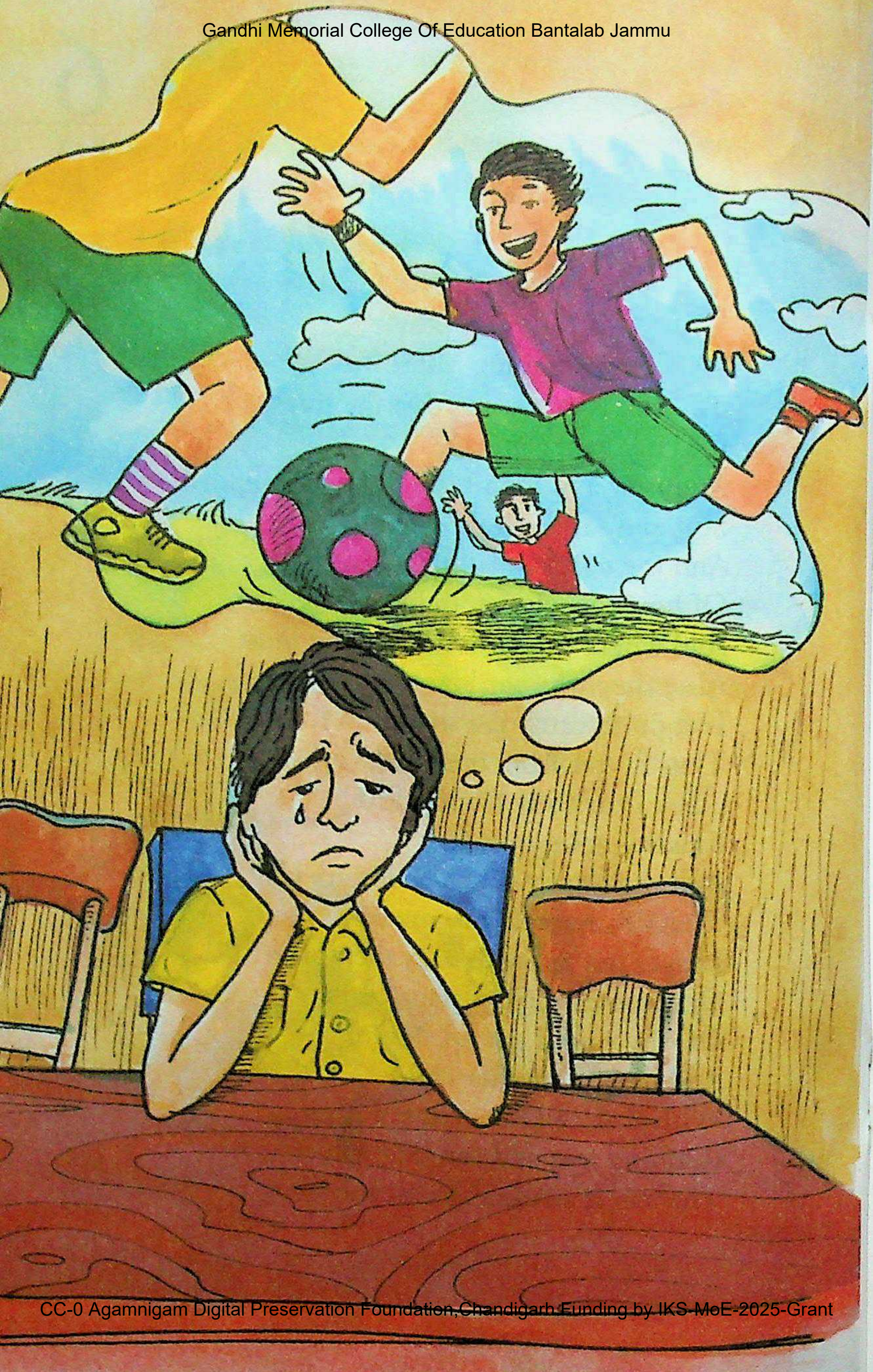
a. The author has shown the Dursleys treat Harry and Dudley very differently. Why has she done this?
b. Do you think it is possible to treat all children even if they don't belong to the same parents, equally? Why/Why not?

6

SIX

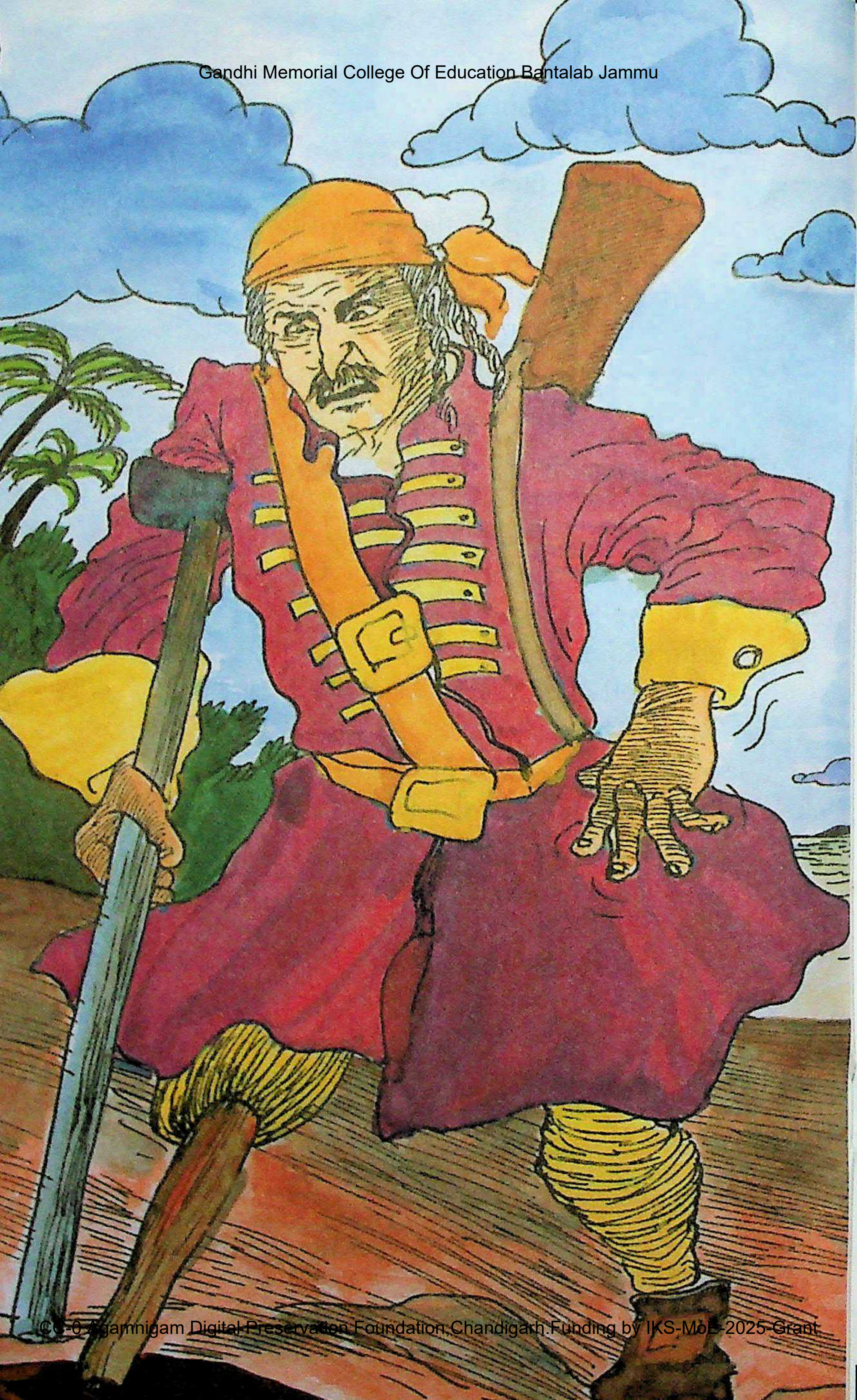
Crippled Child

Why can't I get up, Mum?
The sun is streaming past the trees,
Into my bedroom lair,
And now and then I catch the breeze,
Soft and salt with the morning air,
And the curtains faintly whisper
Of how the wind doth blow,
And where the birds are singing most
Alas, they whisper low.
I strain to catch the sounds of life
That flutter from our road,
They float away from hearing
Elusive, unbestowed.
And the clatter of the children's play
That's drummed into my ears,
Leaves me sad with hazy memories
Of those carefree distant years.
Of why can't I get up, Mum?
And be just another child.
With that child's unchosen future,
Running free and running wild.
The sun is streaming past the trees



Into my bedroom lair,
And sometimes when I catch the breeze,
Reality takes flight,
And I'm walking on the windy shore,
The only soul in sight.
With the shingle rattling in my shoes
Fine droplets in my hair,
And I'm talking with the raging sea
Which jeers at all my cares.
Or I'm cycling down a gusty hill
Or walking in the rain,
Or wending through the woods until
My dreams dissolve again.
And I'm left to live with feeble hopes,
And withered stalks for legs,
That fell upon the slopes of life,
Before the race began.
Why can't I get up, Mum?
No, don't tell me why, just leave,
And if you hear frustrated sobs
Just smile and say "It's teens"
For I'll not live as you have lived.
So leave me to my dreams.

Emma Crates (13)



7

SEVEN

The Treasure Hunt

Out on a treasure hunt, Jim and the ship's crew cross the Atlantic in search of buried treasure. The lure of gold can make everyone go crazy.

But it was not its size that now impressed my companions; it was the knowledge that seven hundred thousand pounds in gold lay somewhere buried below its spreading shadow. The thought of the money, as they drew nearer, swallowed up their previous terrors.

Silver hobbled, grunting, on his crutch; his nostrils stood out and quivered; he cursed like a madman when the flies settled on his hot and shiny countenance; he plucked furiously at the line that held me to him, and from time to time, turned his eyes upon me with a deadly look. Certainly he took no pains to hide his thoughts; and certainly I read them like print. In the immediate nearness of the gold, all else had been forgotten; his promise and the doctor's warning were both things of the past; and I could not doubt that he hoped to seize upon the treasure, find and board the *Hispaniola* under cover of night, cut every honest throat about that island, and sail away as he had at first intended, laden with crimes and riches.

Shaken as I was with these alarms, it was hard for me to keep up with the rapid pace of the treasure hunters. Now and again I stumbled, and it was then that Silver plucked so roughly at the rope, and launched at me his murderous glances. Dick, who had dropped behind us and now brought up the rear, was babbling to himself both prayers and curses, as his fever kept rising. This also added to my wretchedness, and to crown all, I was haunted by the thought of the tragedy that had once been acted on that plateau, when that ungodly buccaneer with the blue face—he who died at Savannah, singing and shouting for drink—had there, with his own hand, cut down his six accomplices.

We were now at the margin of the thicket.

"Huzza, mates, all together!" shouted Merry, and the foremost broke into a run.

And suddenly, not ten yards farther, we beheld them stop. A low cry arose. Silver doubled his pace, digging away with the foot of his crutch like one possessed; and next moment he and I came to a dead halt.

Before us was a great excavation, not very recent, for the sides had fallen in and grass had sprouted on the bottom. In this were the shaft of a pick broken in two and the boards of several packing cases strewn around. On one of these boards I saw, branded with a hot iron, the name *Walrus*—the name of Flint's ship.

All was clear to probation. The cache had been found and rifled: the seven hundred thousand pounds were gone!

There never was such an overturn in this world. Each of these six men was as though he had been struck. But with Silver the blow passed almost instantly. Every thought of his soul had been set full-stretch, like a racer, on that money. Well, he was brought up in a single second, dead; and he kept his head, found his temper, and changed his plan before the others had had time to realise the disappointment.

"Jim", he whispered, "take that, and standby for trouble". And he passed me a double-barrelled pistol.

At the same time he began quietly moving northwards, and in a few steps had put the hollow between us two and the other five. Then he looked at me and nodded, as much as to say, "here is a narrow corner," as, indeed, I thought it was. His looks were now quite friendly; and I was so revolted at these constant changes that I could not forbear whispering, "So you've changed sides again."

There was no time left for him to answer in. The buccaneers, with oaths and cries, began to leap, one after another, into the pit, and to dig with their fingers, throwing the boards aside as they did so. Morgan found a piece of gold. He held it up with a spout of oaths. It was a two-guinea piece, and it went from hand to hand among them for a quarter of a minute.

"Two guineas!" roared Merry, shaking it at Silver. "That's your seven hundred thousand pounds, is it? You're the man for bargains, ain't you? You're him that never bungled nothing, you wooden-headed lubber!"

"Dig away, boys," said Silver, with the coolest insolence, "you'll find some pignuts and I shouldn't wonder."

"Pignuts!" repeated Merry in a scream. "Mates, do you hear that? I tell you, now, that man there knew it all along. Look in the face of him, and you'll see it wrote there."

"Ah, Merry," remarked Silver, "standing for cap'n again? You're a pushing lad, to be sure."

But this time everyone was entirely in Merry's favour. They began to scramble out of the excavation, darting furious glances behind them. One thing I observed, which looked well for us: they all got out upon the opposite side from Silver.

Well, there we stood, two on one side, five on the other, the pit between us, and nobody screwed up high enough to offer the first blow. Silver never moved; he watched them, very upright on his crutch, and looked as cool as ever I saw him. He was brave, and no mistake.

At last Merry seemed to think a speech might help matters.

"Mates", says he, "there's two of them alone there: one's the old cripple that brought us all here and blundered us down to this; the other's that cub that I mean to have the heart of. Now, mates—"

He was raising his arm and his voice, and plainly meant to lead a charge. But just then—*crack! crack! crack!*—three muskets shots flashed out of the thicket. Merry tumbled head foremost into the excavation; the man with the bandage spun round like a teetotum and fell all his length upon his side, where he lay dead, but still twitching; and the other three turned and ran for it with all their might.

Before you could wink, Long John had fired two barrels of a pistol into the struggling Merry; and as the man rolled up his eyes at him in the last agony,

At the same moment, the doctor, Gray and Ben Gunn joined us, with smoking muskets, from among the nutmeg trees.

"Forward!" cried the doctor. "Double quick, my lads. We must head 'em off the boats."

And we set off at great pace, sometimes plunging through the bushes to the chest.

I tell you, but Silver was anxious to keep up with us. The work that man went through, leaping on his crutch till the muscles of his chest were fit to burst, was work no sound man ever equalled; and so thinks the doctor. As it was, he was already thirty yards behind us, and on the verge of strangling, when we reached the brow of the slope.

"Doctor," he hailed, "see there! No hurry!"

Sure enough there was no hurry. In a more open part of the plateau we could see the three survivors still running in the same direction as they had started, right for Mizzenmast Hill. We were already between them and the boats, and so we four sat down to breathe, while Long John, mopping his face, came slowly up with us.

"Thank ye kindly, doctor," says he. "You came in about the nick, I guess, for me and Hawkins. And so it's you, Ben Gunn!" he added. "Well, you're a nice one, to be sure."

"I'm Ben Gunn, I am," replied the maroon, wriggling like an eel in his embarrassment. "And," he added, after a long pause, "how do, Mr Silver? Pretty well, I thank ye, says you."

"Ben, Ben," murmured Silver, "to think as you've done me!"

The doctor sent back Gray for one of the pickaxes, deserted in their flight by the mutineers; and then as we proceeded leisurely downhill to where the boats were lying, related, in a few words, what had taken place. It was a story that interested Silver; and Ben Gunn, the half-idiot Maroon, was the hero from beginning to end.

Ben, in his long, lonely wanderings about the island, had found the skeleton—it was he that had rifled it; he had found the treasure; he had dug it up (it was the haft of his pickaxe that lay broken in the excavation); he had carried it on his back, in many weary journeys, from the foot of the tall pine to a cave he had on the two-pointed hill at the north-east angle of the island, and there it had lain stored in safety since two months before the arrival of the *Hispaniola*.

When the doctor had wormed this secret from him, on the afternoon of the attack, and when next morning he saw the anchorage deserted, he had gone to Silver, given him the chart, which was now useless—given him the stores, for Ben Gunn's cave was well supplied with goats' meat salted by himself—given anything and everything to get a chance of moving in safety from the stockade to the two-pointed hill, there to be clear of malaria and keep a guard on the money.

"As for you, Jim," he said, "it went against my heart, but I did what I thought best for those who had stood by their duty. And if you were not one of these, whose fault was it?"

An extract from 'Treasure Island'
by R.L. Stevenson

1. Learn new words

a. Extravagance
b. Countenance
c. Insolence
d. Blunder

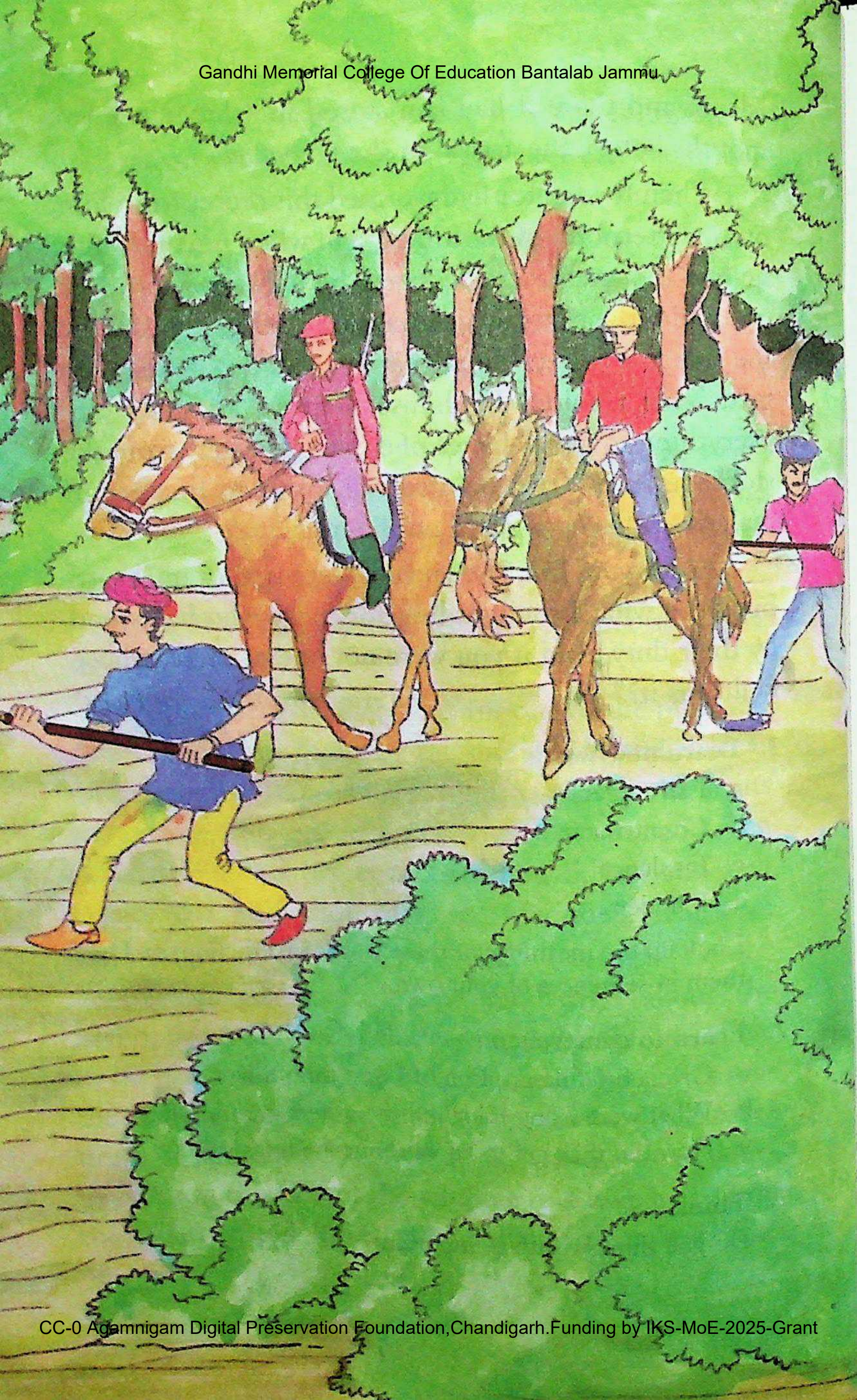
Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. Learn to comprehend

a. Give a brief description of Long John Silver.
b. What were Long John and the others gunning for?
c. How did they get to know about the treasure?

3. Think

Do you think wealth is important?



8

EIGHT

The Poachers

Man kills animals. Why does he do so? For pleasure? Do animals kill man for pleasure?

Cows, buffaloes and goats were available in plenty along the edges of the forest. There was a time when the tiger had settled himself along the fringes of the forest, feeding on domestic animals. But it wasn't long before humans on foot had come after him, making noise and hurling stones and sharply pointed sticks. Once, when he had been running away from the humans, a loud sound had exploded behind him and an unimaginably fast moving object had scorched past him, grazing his shoulder. Since that time the tiger had stayed away from the edge of the forest, avoiding all humans on foot and their cattle.

Strangely, the buffalo he had killed during the previous night had been wandering to his territory at the very heart of the forest. Two days ago a herd of buffalo and their human masters had intruded his section of the forest. One of the animals had strayed from the group and he had killed it. The tiger had eaten quickly, tucking away as much as he could during the hours of darkness. During the day the humans had come looking for their animal and the tiger had quietly slipped away. The memory of their stones, pointed sticks and exploding projectiles was still fresh in his mind. The tiger departed from his territory and spent the day at this childhood hideout in the ravine. In the evening he had moved on, drifting towards the lake, where he met his sister and her family.

The tiger disliked the presence of humans and their cattle. They disturbed the forest. The moment they appeared, his prey vanished to other parts of the forest. Hunting became difficult. The hours spent searching for deer and antelope yielded no results. He had no intentions of tangling with humans and their animals, but the absence of his regular prey and the fact that his stomach was empty had compelled him to attack the buffalo.

The moon had come out once again. Its pale light pierced the canopy above and lit the forest floor in patches of glistening silveriness, alternating with eerie darkness. Crickets called and fruit bats hunted in the skies above. The tiger stretched; he was sleepy. The cave was nearby. He decided to rest there till morning.

The tiger walked along a path, the same path he had tread so often as a cub. As he placed his foot on the ground, he caught the metallic gleam of reflected moonlight from something lying there. Even as he began to shift his weight to the foot which was on the ground, he withdrew it, jerking it back towards him.

But it was too late—the pressure of his foot had triggered a murderous mechanism.

The only thing which saved the tiger's leg from total destruction was his quick reaction. The gleam of metal in the moonlight had warned him and he had begun to retract his foot. Faster than the blinking of an eye, two sets of steel jaws with strong, razor-sharp teeth slammed shut. The jaws sliced through the lower part of his leg with staggering force. A section of his leg, just above his claws, was torn open at the front and the back.

The tiger howled in pain. The mechanism had sliced through this leg. The forest rang with the cries of the wounded animal. His shrieks broke the silence of the night. Even his sister and her cubs who were down by the lake heard him.

The tiger hobbled on three legs, dangling his damaged paw. The wound hurt terribly—so much, that he couldn't even bring himself to lick it. Blood pumped out from the leg, staining the grass red. The tiger collapsed, his call of distress permanently shattering the peace of the night. Time passed by. The moon proceeded on its westward journey. The stars faded from the sky and only when the sun rose, did the tiger's laments cease.

It was early morning, about 7 a.m. when two men made their way towards the ravine. One of them had a sack slung over his shoulder and a gun in his hand. The other carried a long spear. They talked excitedly between themselves when they saw the sprung trap.

The first one bet down, examining the ground around the trap. He saw a mess of pug marks and blood. He pointed the obvious train to his companion. They talked for while, and then apparently deciding on the next course of action, they followed the pug-mark trail. The tiger had bled a huge amount of blood; his tracks were spattered with large, dark stains. The stream of blood led to a collection of thick, leafy bushes. The men halted. Their eyes darted nervously amongst the bushes. Both men sweated, intensely aware that their task was dangerous. They were following a wounded tiger.

Standing at the edge of the bushes the two men began to argue. One of them, the one carrying the spear, wanted to pursue the animal and kill it. The other man thought the idea stupid, saying that it was suicidal to trail a wounded tiger. The man with the spear tried to encourage his partner, telling him that they could make good money as the gentleman from the city was willing to pay them 10,000 rupees for the skin and the bones. The man with the gun hesitated, unable to make up his mind.

The tiger observed them. He was sitting barely two metres from the arguing men. If his foot had not been wounded he would have slunk away, preferring to keep his distance from men on the ground. But his injured leg had drained his energy. The animal sat quietly waiting for the men to depart.

The man with the spear finally convinced his companion. Greed overcame common sense. He stepped forward. entering the bushes. The tiger was generally never aggressive towards humans. An inner sense cautioned him about this two-footed animal. Though slow-moving and apparently defenceless, something warned him that his was a dangerous species. But now pain had clouded his mind. When the men entered the bushes, the tiger leapt. His leap was not the usual lightning-quick movement which brought down fleet-footed prey; it was a slow, ponderous jump. Any jungle animal would have avoided the tiger's attack, but the lead-footed humans did not react quickly enough.

The tiger raked the man with the spear with his good paw, and then using his teeth, he bit. To kill deer and antelope, the tiger always grabbed their throats, but in this case maybe his intention was not to kill, maybe he was only expressing his anger at being disturbed while in pain. The tiger bit the man's shoulder and shook him like a toy.

The man with the gun was a sensible man. He had held back not because he was a coward but because he knew that hunting a wounded tiger in thick jungle was foolhardy. But he had allowed his companion to convince him against his better judgement and now he faced the consequences of his decision. It all happened so fast that he had little time to react.

The first view he got of the tiger was that of the animal shaking his helpless partner. The sight was terrible. His friend was being shaken like a rat. His body was swung effortlessly from side to side. The tiger's face was contorted in a horrible snarl and blood dripped from its mouth. The accompanying sounds were awful. The animal's fearful roars were mingled with his partner's terror-stricken screams.

The man with the gun was paralysed. From behind his partner's kicking body, he saw the tiger's eyes. The fiery orbs reflected a terrible anger. The animal was staring at him. Blood pounded through the man's veins with paralysing force, making it impossible for him to think in a rational manner. His body shook.

The tiger dropped his screaming victim to the ground. On three legs the animal jumped forward. The man's gun fell from his nerveless hands. He turned and ran. His feet tore across the forest floor. The tiger halted, making no effort to follow the fleeing human. The animal howled in rage. His cries thundered amidst the bushes and tress. The animal was beside itself with anger. The all-consuming pain in its leg was temporarily forgotten. It was some time before the tiger's outpourings ended.

Whimpering sounds from behind reminded the tiger that another human remained. He turned. The renewed attention of the tiger silenced the man with the spear. The tiger's flaming eyes locked with him. The man frothed at the mouth. His body shook violently. He saw the pain and the anger in the tiger's eyes. He had destroyed its leg. Now… he was at the animal's mercy. The man shut his eyes, unable to stand the animal's accusing glare. With tightly screwed eyes he prayed, he begged the tiger to forgive him, he promised never to lay a trap ever again. The man babbled hysterically, refusing to open his eyes. Time passed. A gentle shower of rain fell on his upturned face. After a while a large drop fell directly on one of his eyes. The man blinked. He looked fearfully about him. He searched for the tiger. There was no sign of the wounded animal.

An extract from 'Ranthambore Adventure'
by Deepak Dalal

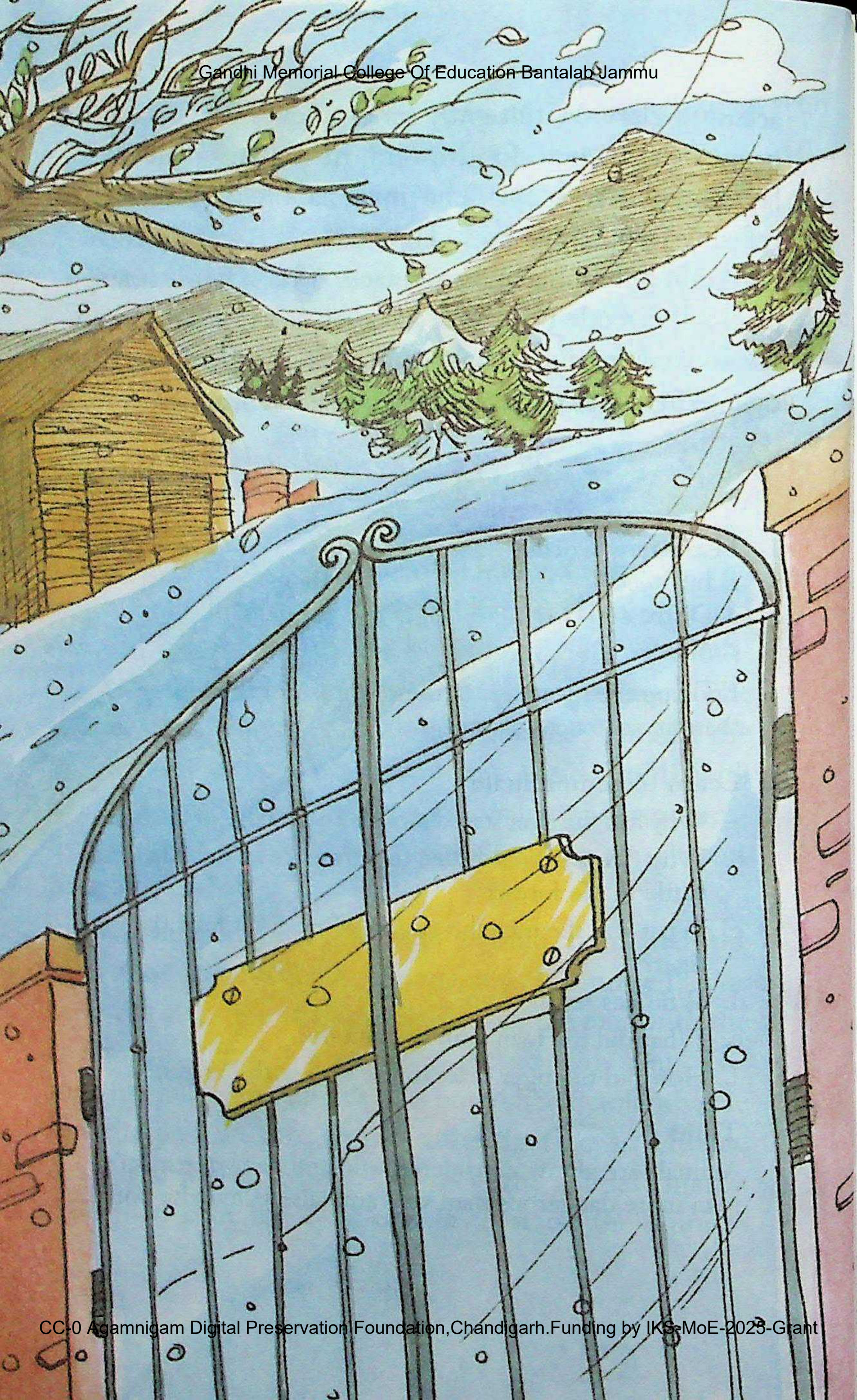
1. **Learn new words**
    - a. Intruded
    - b. Retract
    - c. Distress
    - d. Lament
    - e. Mercy

    Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. **Learn to comprehend**
    - a. Why had the tiger stayed away from the edge of the forest?
    - b. Why did the tiger dislike the presence of humans and cattle in the forest?
    - c. What was the metallic gleam? How did it hurt the tiger?
    - d. Who has set the trap?
    - e. What did the man with the gun do?
    - f. How did the tiger react to the man with the gun?

3. **Think**

    Animals are always considered wild and dangerous. Isn't man more dangerous than wild animals? Why/why not?



9

NINE

A Winter Remembrance

Early one winter's day I went out walking
And left my bootprints patterned in the snow.
It could have been a century ago—
No sounds of dogs or cars or people talking,
Only the wind keening as it began to blow.

I strode across the park towards the High Street.
The trees were hung with canopies of frost
And as I left the park, and as I crossed
The road, I saw that every path and by street
Under a creaseless layer of snow was lost.

I neared the war memorial. A wreath
Still lay below it with its poppies red
And, coming closer, I saw the flowers had bled
Their dye into the icy snow beneath,
Making them blanched and cold as stone, and dead.

By Amold Hunt

10

TEN

About Pip

A young boy meets a strange man with strange demands. What does he do?

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing jonger or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of this tombstone and my sister—Mrs Joe Gargery, who married this blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones. The shape of the letters on my father's, gave me an odd idea that he was a square, stout, dark man, with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "Also Georgiana Wife of the Above," I drew a childish conclusion that my mother was freckled and sickly. To five little stone lozenges, each about a foot and a half long, which were arranged in a neat row beside their grave, and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine—who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle—I am indebted for a belief I religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their trousers-pockets, and had never taken them out in this state of existence.

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea. My first most vivid and broad impression off the identity of things, seems to me to have been gained on a memorable raw afternoon towards evening. At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried; and that the dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, with scattered cattle feeding on it, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea; and that the small bundle of shivers growing afraid of it all and beginning to cry, was Pip.

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse gray, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

"Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Once more," said the man, staring at me. "Give it mouth!"

"Pip, Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man. "Point out the place!"

I pointed to where our village lay, on the flat inshore among the alder trees and pollards, a mile or more from the church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets. There was nothing in them but a piece of bread. When the church came to itself—for he was so sudden and strong, that he made it go head over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet—when the church came to itself, I say, I was seated on a high tombstone, trembling, while he ate the bread ravenously.

"You young dog," said the man, licking his lips, "what fat cheeks you ha' got."

"I believe they were fat, though I was at that time undersized for my years, and not strong.

"Darn me if I couldn't eat 'em," said the man, with a threatening shake of his head. "and if I han't half a mind to't!"

I earnestly expressed my hope that he wouldn't and held tighter the tombstone on which he had put me; partly to keep myself upon it; partly, to keep myself from crying.

"Now then, lookee here!" said the man. "Where's you mother?"

"There, sir!" said I.

He started, made a short run, and stopped and looked over his shoulder.

"There, sir!" I timidly exclaimed. "Also Georgiana'. That's my mother."

"Oh!" said he, coming back. "And is that your father along your mother?"

"Yes, sir," said I; "him too; late of this parish."

"Ha!" he muttered the, considering. "Who d'ye live with—supposin' you're kindly let to live, which I han't made up my mind about?"

"My sister, sir—Mrs Joe Gargery—wife of Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, sir."

"Blacksmith, eh?" said he. And he looked down at this leg. After darkly looking at his leg and at me several times, he came closer to my tombstone, took me by both arms, tilted me back as far as he could hold me.

"Now lookee here," he said, "the question being whether you're to be let to live. You know what a file is?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you know what wittles is?"

"Yes, sir."

After each question he tilted me over a little more, so as to give me a greater sense of helplessness and danger.

"You get me a file," He tilted me again. "And you get me wittles." He tilted me again. "You bring 'em both to me." He tilted me again. "Or I'll have your heart and liver out." He tilted me again.

I was dreadfully frightened, and so giddy that I clung to him with both hands, and said, "If you would kindly please to let me keep upright, sir, perhaps I shouldn't be sick, and perhaps I could attend more."

He gave me a most tremendous dip and roll, so that the church jumped over its own weather-cock. Then, he held me by the arms, in an upright position on the top of the stone, and went on it these fearful terms.

"You bring me, tomorrow morning early, that file and them wittles. You bring the lot to me, at that old Battery over yonder. You do it, and you never dare to say a word or dare to make sign concerning your having seen such a person as me, or any person sumever, and you shall be let to live. You fail, or you go from my words in any partickler, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate. Now, I ain't alone, as you may think I am. There's a young man hid with me, in comparison with which young man I am an angel. That young man hears the words I speak. That young man has a secret way peculiar to himself, of getting at a boy, and at his heart, and at his liver. It is in vain for a boy to attempt to hide himself from that young man. A boy may lock his door, may be warm in bed, may tuck himself up, may draw the clothes over his head, may think himself comfortable and safe, but that young man will softly creep and creep his way to him and tear him open. I am keeping that young man from harming of you at the present moment, with great difficulty. I find it very hard to hold that young man off your inside. Now, what do you say?"

I said that I would get him the file, and I would get him what broken bits of food I could, and I would come to him at the Battery, early in the morning.

"Say, Lord strike you dead if you don't!" said the man.

"Now," he pursued, "you remember what you've undertook, and you remember that young man, and you get home!"

"Goo-good-night, sir," I faltered.

"Much of that!" said he, glancing about him over the cold we flat. "I wish I was a frog, Or an eel!"

At the same time, he hugged his shuddering body in both his arms—clasping himself as if to hold himself together—and limped towards the low church wall. As I saw him go, he looked in my young eyes as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.

When he came to the low church wall, he got over it like a man whose legs were numbed and stiff, and then turned round to look for me. When I saw him turning, I set my face towards home, and made the best use of my legs. But presently I looked over my shoulder, and saw him going on again towards the river, still hugging himself in both arms, and picking his way with his sore feet among the great stones dropped into the marshes here and there.

The marshes were just a long, black, horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of long, angry, red lines and dense black lines intermixed. On the edge of the river I could faintly make out the only two black things in all the prospect that seemed to be standing upright; one of these was the beacon by which the sailors steered-like an unhooked cask upon a pole—an ugly thing when you were near it; the other, a gibbet, with some chains hanging to it, which had once held a pirate. The man was limping on towards this latter, as if he were the pirate come to life, and come down, and going back to hook himself up again. It gave me a terrible turn when I thought so; and as I saw the cattle lifting their heads to gaze after him, I wondered whether they thought so too. I looked all round for the horrible young man, and could see no signs of him. But, now I was frightened again, and ran home without stopping.

An extract from 'Great Expectations'
by Charles Dickens

1. Learn new words

a. Vivid
b. Bleak
c. Earnest
d. Shuddering

Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. Learn to comprehend

a. What were some of the author's most vivid and broad impressions?
b. Describe the man Pip met.
c. What did the man want of Pip?
d. How did the man frighten Pip?

3. Think

a. Did the man really mean all that he threatened to do to Pip?
b. What would you have done, had you been in Pip's place?

11

ELEVEN

The Disappearance of J. Thomson

Thomson has run away! Investigation is on... Where and why could he have suddenly disappeared?

Certainly the Head was surprised. He read the note again. No. There was no mistake. "Thomson is not in the House." There could be no two meanings about that.

"Go across to Mr Merevale's," he said at last, "and ask him if he would mind seeing me here for a moment."

The butler bowed his head gently, but with more than a touch of pained astonishment. He thought the Headmaster might show more respect for persons. A butler is not an errand-boy.

"Sir?" he said, giving the Head a last chance, as it were, of realizing the situation.

"Ask Mr Merevale to step over here for a moment."

The poor man bowed once more. The phantom of a half smoked cigar floated reproachfully before his eyes. He had lit it a quarter of an hour ago in fond anticipation of a quiet evening. Unless a miracle had occurred, it must be out by this time. And he knew as well as anybody else that a re-lighted cigar is never at its best. But he went, and in a few minutes Mr Merevale entered the room.

"Sit down, Mr Merevale," said the Head. "Am I to understand from your note that Thomson is actually not in the House?"

Mr Merevale thought that if he had managed to understand anything else from the note he must possess a mind of no common order, but he did not say so.

"No," he said. "Thomson has not been in the House since lunchtime, as far as I know. It is a curious thing."

"It is exceedingly serious. Exceedingly so. For many reasons. Have you any idea where he was seen last?"

"Harrison in my House says he saw him at about three o'clock."

"Ah!"

"According to Harrison, he was walking in the direction of Stapleton."

"Ah. Well, it is satisfactory to know even as little as that."

"Just so. But Mace—he is in my House, too—declares that he saw Thomson at about the same time cycling in the direction of Badgwick. Both accounts can scarcely be correct."

"But—dear me, are you certain, Mr Merevale?"

Merevale nodded to imply that he was. The Head drummed irritably with his fingers on the arm of his chair. This mystery, coming as it did after the series of worries through which he had been passing for the last few days, annoyed him as much as it is to be supposed the last straw annoyed the proverbial camel.

"As a matter of fact," said Merevale, "I know that Thomson started to run in the long race this afternoon. I met him going to the starting-place, and advised him to go and change again. He was not looking at all fit for such a long run. It seems to me that Welch might know where he is. Thomson and he got well ahead of the others after the start, so that if, as I expect, Thomson dropped out early in the race, Welch could probably tell us where it happened. That would give us some clue to his whereabouts, at any rate."

"Have you questioned Welch?"

"Not yet. Welch came back very tired, quite tired out in fact, and went straight to bed. I hardly liked to wake him except as a last resource. Perhaps I had better do so now?"

"I think you should most certainly. Something serious must have happened to Thomson to keep him out of his House as late as this. Unless…"

He stopped. Merevale looked up enquiringly. The Head, after a moment's deliberation, proceeded to explain.

"I have made a very unfortunate mistake with regard to Thomson, Mr Merevale. A variety of reasons led me to think that he had had something to do with this theft of the sports prizes."

"Thomson!" broke in Merevale incredulously.

"There was a considerable weight of evidence against him, which I have since found to be perfectly untrustworthy, but which at the time seemed to me almost conclusive."

"But surely," put in Merevale again, "surely Thomson would be the last boy to do such a thing. Why should he? What would he gain by it?"

"Precisely. I can understand that perfectly in the light of certain information which I have just received from the inspector. But at the time, as I say, I believed him guilty. I even went so far as to send for him and question him upon the subject. Now it has occurred to me, Mr Merevale—you understand that I put it forward merely as a conjecture—it occurs to me -"

"That Thomson has run away," said Merevale bluntly.

The Head, slightly discomposed by this Sherlock Holmes-like reading of his thoughts, pulled himself together, and said, "Ah-just so. I think it very possible."

"I do not agree with you," said Merevale. "I know Thomson well, and I think he is the last boy to do such a thing. He is neither a fool nor a coward, to put it shortly, and he would need to have a great deal of both in him to run away."

The Head looked slightly relieved at this.

"You—ah—think so?" he said.

"I certainly do. In the first place, where, unless he went home, would he run to? And as he would be going home in a couple of days in the ordinary course of things, he would hardly be foolish enough to risk expulsion in such a way."

Mr Merevale always enjoyed his straight talks with the Headmaster. Unlike most of his colleagues he stood in no awe of him whatever. He always found him ready to listen to sound argument, and what was better, willing to be convinced. It was so in this case.

"Then I think we may dismiss that idea," said the Head with visible relief. The idea of such a scandal occurring at St Austin's had filled him with unfeigned horror. "And now I think it would be as well to go across to your House and hear what Welch has to say about the matter. Unless Thomson returns soon—and it is already past nine o'clock—we shall have to send out search parties."

Five minutes later Welch, enjoying a sound beauty sleep, began to be possessed of a vague idea that somebody was trying to murder him. His subsequent struggles for life partially woke him, and enabled him to see dimly that two figures were standing by his bed.

"Yes?" he murmured sleepily, turning over on to his side again, and preparing to doze off. The shaking continued. This was too much. "Look here," said he fiercely, sitting up. Then he recognised his visitors. As his eye fell on Merevale, he wondered whether anything had occurred to bring down his wrath upon him. Perhaps he had gone to bed without leave, and was being routed out to read at prayers or do some work? No, he remembered distinctly getting permission to turn in. What then could be the matter?

At this point he recognised the Headmaster, and the last mists of sleep left him.

"Yes, sir?" he said, wide awake now.

Merevale put the case briefly and clearly to him. "Sorry to disturb you, Welch, I know you are tired."

"Not at all, sir," said Welch, politely.

"But there is something we must ask you. You probably do not know that Thomson has not returned?"

"Not returned!"

"No. Nobody knows where he is. You were probably the last to see him. What happened when you and he started for the long run this afternoon? You lost sight of the rest, did you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"And Thomson dropped out."

"Ah." This from the Headmaster.

"Yes, sir. He said he couldn't go any farther. He told me to go on. And, of course. I did, as it was a race. I advised him to go back to the house and change. He looked regularly done up. I think he ran too hard in the mile yesterday."

The Head spoke.

"I thought that some such thing must have happened. Where was it that he dropped out, Welch?"

"It was just as we came to a long ploughed field, sir, by the side of a big wood."

"Parker's Spinney, I expect," put in Merevale.

"Yes, sir. About a mile from the college."

"And you saw nothing more of him after that?" enquired the Headmaster.

"No, sir. He was lying on his back when I left him. I should think some of the others must have seen him after I did. He didn't look as if he was likely to get up for some time."

"Well," said the Head, as he and Merevale went out of the room, leaving Welch to his slumbers, "we have gained little by seeing Welch. I had hoped for something more. I must send the prefects out to look for Thomson at once."

"It will be a difficult business," said Merevale, refraining to his credit be it said—from a mention of needles and haystacks. "We have nothing to go upon.

He may be anywhere for all we know. I suppose it is hardly likely that he is still where Welch left him?"

The Head seemed to think this improbable. "That would scarcely be the case unless he was very much exhausted. It is more than five hours since Welch saw him. I can hardly believe that the worst exhaustion would last so long. However, if you would kindly tell your House prefects of this…"

"And send them out to search?"

"Yes. We must do all we can. Tell them to begin searching where Thomson was last seen. I will go round to the other House. Dear me, this is exceedingly annoying. Exceedingly so."

Merevale admitted that it was, and having seen his visitor out of the House, went to the studies to speak to the prefects. He found Charteris and Tony together in the former sanctum.

"Has anything been heard about Thomson, sir?" said Tony, as he entered.

"That is just what I want to see you about, Graham. Will you go and bring the rest of the prefects here?"

"Now," he said, as Tony returned with Swift and Daintree, the two remaining House-prefects, "you all know, of course, that Thomson is not in the House. The Headmaster wants you to go and look for him. Welch seems to have been the last to see him, and he left him lying in a ploughed field near Parker's Spinney. You all know Parker's Spinney, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you had better begin searching from there. Go in twos if you like, or singly. Don't all go together. I want you all to be back by eleven. All got watches?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good. You'd better take lanterns of some sort. I think I can raise a bicycle lamp each, and there is a good moon. Look everywhere, and shout as much as you like. I think he must have sprained an ankle or something. He is probably lying somewhere unable to move, and too far away from the road to make his voice heard to anyone. If you start now, you will have just an hour and a half. You should have found him by then. The prefects from the other Houses will help you."

Daintree put in a pertinent question.

"How about trespassing, sir?"

"Oh, go where you like. In reason, you know. Don't go getting the school mixed up in any unpleasantness, of course, but remember that your main object is to find Thomson. You all understand?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Very good. Then start at once."

"By Jove," said Swift, when he had gone, "what an unholy rag! This suits yours truly. Poor old Jim, though. I wonder what the deuce has happened to him?"

At that very moment the Headmaster, leaving Philpott's House to go to Prater's, was wondering the same thing. In spite of Mr Merevale's argument, he found himself drifting back to his former belief that Jim had run away. What else could keep him out of the House more than three hours after lock-up? And he had some reason for running away, for the *conscia mens recti*, though an excellent institution in theory, is not nearly so useful an ally as it should be in practice. The Head knocked at Prater's door, pondering darkly within himself.

An extract from 'The Pothunters'
by P.G. Wodehouse

1. Learn new words

a. Phantom
b. Reproach
c. Deliberation
d. Conclusive
e. Discomposed
f. Unfeigned
g. Slumbers
h. Pondering

Look up the meanings of these words in a dictionary. Use them in sentences of your own.

2. Learn to comprehend

a. Why did the Head want Mr Merevale to see him at once?
b. Who were the people who had claimed to see Thomson last? What had he been doing?
c. Why did the Head think that Thomson had run away?

d. Why did Mr Merevale not accept that Thomson had run away?
e. Who was Welch?
f. Why were the prefects summoned?

3. Think

a. Had you been in the Head's position, what course of action would you have taken to trace Thomson?
b. Look at the following two expressions from the text. Find out their meanings:
   (i) "…needles and haystacks"
   (ii) "…straw annoyed the proverbial camel"

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